The inauguration of the Devaswom Department had brought certain disabilities to Nairs as a community. The landed properties of several temples once belonged to Nairs and in course of time passed into the hands of Ezhavas in North Travancore and Nadars in South Travancore. Thus on the one side they had to fight against the Government and on the other side either against Ezhavas or Nadars. To save them from that trouble it was necessary that those landed properties which had been given away by their ancestors to temples as free gifts should now be restored to them.

The Member then stated that the Kanikars of the taluk living near the Kodayar dam were being persecuted by the menials of the Forest Department in various ways. Another disability from which they were suffering was that they were subject to the attack of small-pox. The only remedy he could suggest was that they should be vaccinated.

Finally, the Member represented that there was once a proposal to appoint female vaccinators and he did not know why that proposal was not given effect to.

Dewan's reply.—It is difficult to give you a reply. You are making several defamatory statements without making yourself responsible for them. I do not propose to deal with them at all.

You suggested that certain sections of the Penal Code should be deleted. That is a matter for the legislature.

You made certain suggestions for vaccinating Kanikars. Everybody will be vaccinated under the rules. The employment of female vaccinators is a different matter. I am not sure about what you say in regard to them. You do not seem to know that female vaccinators were as a matter of fact entertained some time ago.

160. Constitutional reforms.

Mr. N. Madhavan Nair B. A., B. L. (Member, Trivandrum Taluk) took a brief survey of the origin and growth of popular institutions in the State which bore eloquent testimony to the far-sighted statesmanship of His Highness the Maha Raja and stated that among the reforms recently inaugurated none occupied such a prominent position as the great forward step taken under Regulation II of 1097. Travancore, he said, would ever remember with gratitude the endeavours of the present Dewan to make popular government a living factor in the State, though only within rigidly defined narrow limits at present. Although that Regulation was a decided improvement upon its predecessor, Regulation I of 1095, it had a good many defects and drawbacks. There were several provisions which imposed drastic limitations on the free exercise of the new rights conferred on the people. The number of reserved subjects under Section 11 was unnecessarily large—as many as 13—and that Section, in the Member's opinion, stood in need of amendment on more liberal lines. The number of reserved subjects should be not more than two, *viz.*, those relating to the Ruling Family and the relations of the Government with the Paramount Power or with other States under the treaties and agreements now in force. Another right demanded by the Member was that of enabling the members of the Legislative Council to discuss the salaries and allowances of heads of departments and other superior officers of the State. The annual discussion of the State Budget would furnish an opportunity for a scrutiny of the actions of the officers of the higher grade. The Member contended that the exclusion of the consideration of such an item from the purview of the Legislative Council had the effect of making the officers self-centred and irresponsible and therefore urged that the defect might be removed along with the distinction between votable and non-votable items of the State budget, the non-votable items being confined solely to allotments which came under the reserved subjects.

The Member disapproved of the Dewan being the President of the Legislative Council and pleaded for the President being elected from among the elected members of the Council. He said that he was also not in favour of the President having two votes on all questions which came up for decision and quoted for guidance the corresponding section of the Government of India Act relating to the Indian Legislative Assembly and the Council of State which ran as follows:—

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"All questions in either chamber shall be determined by a majority of votes of members present other than the presiding member who shall, however, have and exercise a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes."

The Member wanted that no new measure of importance should be undertaken without consulting the Council and that no tax of any kind should be levied or enhanced without the consent of the Council. As at present the resolutions passed by the Council were only of a recommendatory nature, greater powers should be given to the members so as to enable them to take a real share in the executive administration of the State. In the opinion of the Member, the remedy lay in the inauguration of a scheme of ministerial responsibility through an Executive Council, the creation of which was rendered urgent on account of the fact that multifarious functions had been concentrated in the Dewan which should be taken away from him with a view to afford him the requisite time and leisure to devote greater attention to larger questions of policy.

In regard to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the Member disapproved of the draft rules *in toto* and was of opinion that the holding of preliminary meetings of the Assembly under the Dewan Peishkars was not conducive to the maintenance of the self-respect of the members or to the growth of a healthy independent public opinion. The lines of reform proposed by the Member were :—

(1) that the Assembly should have a statutory basis ;

(2) that it should be a second chamber to the Legislative Council, on a different franchise representing the land, money and other interests of the country ;

(3) that it should have the powers of interpellation and of moving resolutions on all matters of public importance ;

(4) that it should have the power to discuss the Dewan's opening Address which should foreshadow the policy and measures intended to be adopted during the course of the year ; and

(5) that the annual budget of the State and all measures affecting its finances should receive the assent of the Assembly before they were finally passed by the Government.

Lastly, the Member suggested the appointment of joint standing committees of the Legislative Council and of the Assembly to consider questions of public importance.

Mr. C. Raman Pillai B. A., B. L. (Member, Quilon Taluk) in speaking at length on the methods and principles of constitutional reform, explained what he understood to be the current political thought on the subject. Agreeably to the principles enunciated by him and associated with the conception and realisation of self-government, he laid down that the function of Government was three-fold, *viz.*, (1) that it should discharge its settled duties; (2) that it should perform its duties in relation to its own society; and (3) that it should also discharge its functions as regards other societies. The Member, in examining the widely prevalent opinion that the inauguration of constitutional reforms in an Indian State like Travancore was not of pressing importance, asserted that Travancore had compelled the recognition of her claims to constitutional reforms by her higher level of education and the better development of the political consciousness of her people. The constant solicitude of His Highness the Maha Raja for the happiness and contentment of his subjects had induced him to adopt such a wise and liberal policy of administration that it had earned for him the name of a constitutional monarch. It was needless to enumerate the laws and conventions which might be traced to the adoption of such a policy, but it could be safely expected that the same policy would be continued in the interests of the people. Means, however, had to be devised to ensure that the delegation of authority which resulted therefrom really went to benefit the people and not to the bureaucracy. The suggestion made to secure the end in view was, firstly, to replace the present arrangement under which the executive functions were concentrated in the hands of a single officer, the Dewan, by the more up-to-date one whereby those functions could be shared by a body of

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ministers, and, secondly, to make that executive body responsible to the legislature. As regards the constitution of the executive body, the Member said that the Dewan or the Chief Minister should be a local officer of at least 12 years' service. In exceptional cases an officer of similar experience from British India might also be chosen for the Dewanship. Besides the Dewan there should be not more than four Ministers, of whom two should be appointed from among the elected members of the Legislative Council. Those two members should be given portfolios for the administration of certain departments to be transferred to their charge. In regard to the subjects not so transferred, the services of the Ministers should be utilised as a consultative body. The Ministers should hold office for the term of the Legislative Council, or as long as they maintained the confidence of that body, their obligation to vacate office when they lost its confidence being enforced by the sanction of its refusal to vote supplies.

With regard to the Legislative Council, the Member considered that it should be expanded further in scope and function. The number of members should be increased by 50 per cent. for the present, 70 per cent. of the total strength being made up of elected non-officials. Provision should also be made for a non-official President. All measures affecting the general administration and all laws should be discussed and passed by the Council except those relating to the Ruling Family, the relations of the State with the Paramount Power and foreign States and the military forces of the State, the legislative enactments becoming laws of the State only after they were assented to by His Highness the Maha Raja. The powers of the Council to discuss and vote upon the annual State budget should be subject to the restrictions imposed by clause (8) of Section 16 of Regulation II of 1097, but free from some of the restrictions contained in clause (4) of the same Section. In respect of interpellations and resolutions on matters of public interest, the powers of the Council should extend to all subjects except those mentioned *supra*. The bicameral system of legislature did not find favour with the Member who thought that in a small State like Travancore the passing of the budget by a single legislature would conduce to greater expedition of business.

Coming to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the Member's opinion was that it did not adequately serve the purpose for which it was founded, that its present scope had become narrowed, and that it should, therefore, be expanded and placed on a statutory basis with increased powers. The scheme of reform of that institution proposed by the Member was that Divisional Assemblies should be created where local subjects should be discussed and that the members of those Assemblies should be elected from *pakuthies*, each *pakuthi* returning one member. The Dewan Peishkars should be the Presidents of those assemblies. The membership in the Divisional Assembly should last for 4 years. Ordinarily, the central Popular Assembly should meet once in two years. But if a majority of the Division Assemblies considered that a meeting of the central assembly should be held at the capital in a particular year, Government should make arrangements to hold the session accordingly. Each member of the Assembly should have a term of two years' membership. The subjects to be discussed by the Assembly should be those mentioned as being within the purview of the Legislative Council. The members should have the power of moving resolutions and voting upon them. Such resolutions, when carried by a majority of members not below a fixed minimum percentage, should have the same recommendatory force as those of the Legislative Council.

Finally, the Member suggested that the Government might extend the principle of local self-government so as to secure the fullest possible freedom to them from the control of the Central Government, but without making any tangible addition to the financial burden on the people.

161. Responsible Government.

Mr. M. R. Velu Karnavar (Member, Municipal Council, Haripad) in urging the necessity for the establishment of responsible government in Travancore, said that the time for it had come, as the people were becoming conscious of their civic rights and responsibilities. According to him the present system had to be changed, as well as the *personnel* ofthe administration. It was pointed out that

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